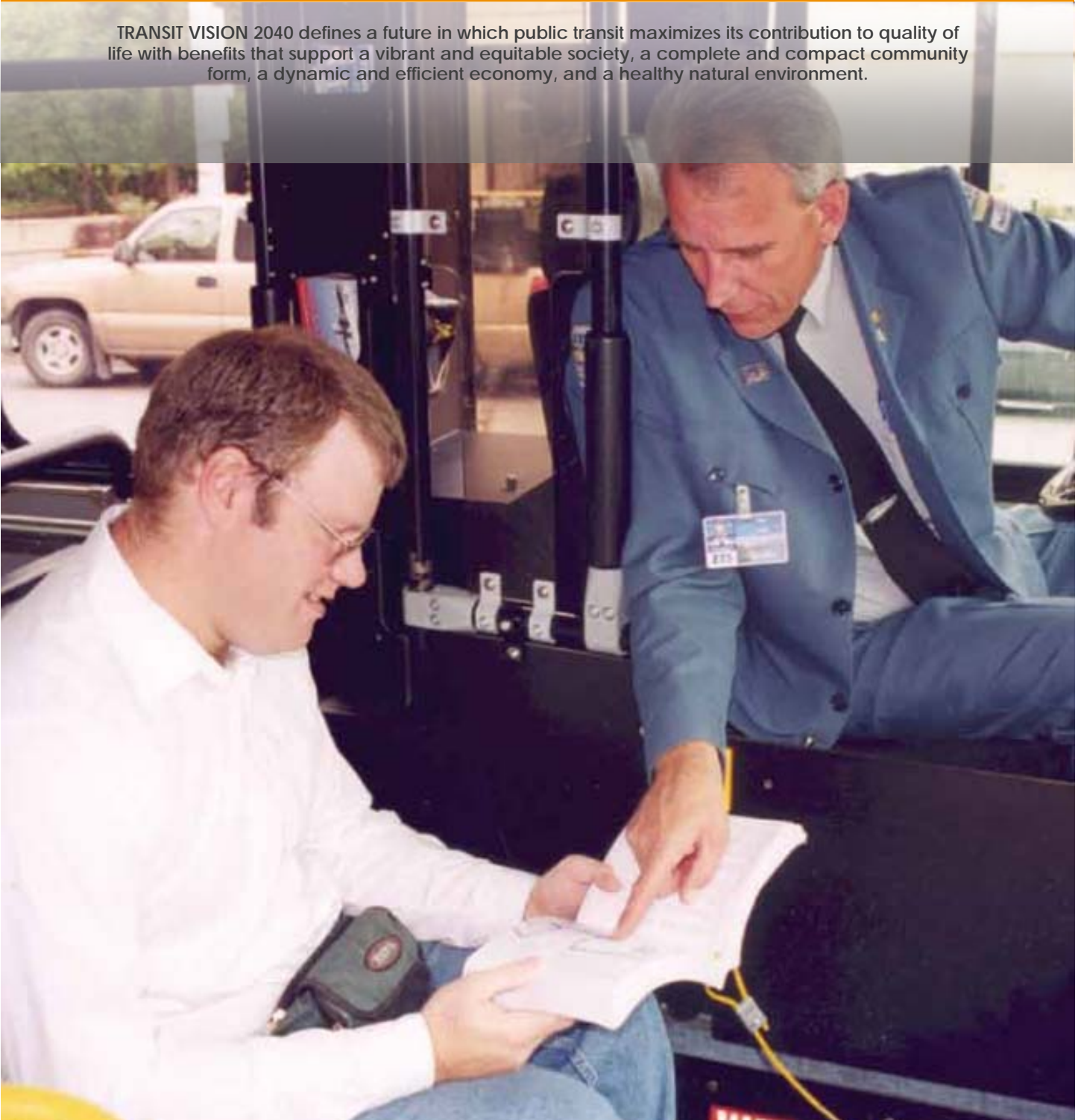


# TRANSIT VISION 2040 — FROM VISION TO ACTION

TRANSIT VISION 2040 defines a future in which public transit maximizes its contribution to quality of life with benefits that support a vibrant and equitable society, a complete and compact community form, a dynamic and efficient economy, and a healthy natural environment.



## THEME 3: FOCUSING ON CUSTOMERS

STRATEGIC  
DIRECTION

3.2

Focusing on customers  
with mobility challenges

# FOCUSING ON CUSTOMERS

## Strategic Direction 3.2:

### Focus on serving customers with mobility challenges

*The anticipated growth in the volume of seniors and persons with disabilities using transit demands a major response. The industry will seek to maximize the attractiveness of conventional services to seniors and persons with disabilities, in order to reduce the cost burden of specialized services. Transit systems may develop initiatives related to fares, customer education and travel training, staff sensitivity training, more accessible vehicles and structures, and the efficient concurrent operation of conventional and specialized services.*

**Specialized transit services** should be offered for members of the community with mobility challenges that make the use of conventional transit difficult or impossible.

The high costs that can be associated with the provision of specialized transit services can be reduced by **making conventional transit fully accessible**.



**Accessible transit vehicles** include low floor buses, the use of both visual and auditory next stop announcements, and enough interior space to accommodate two wheelchairs.

**Accessible transit facilities** can include elevators, ramps, and sufficient interior space to allow for the manoeuvring of wheelchairs and scooters.

**Travel training programs** can be made available to members of community to raise awareness and knowledge of local accessible transit options and how they can be used by people with mobility challenges.



# PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

## Indicator 1: Accessible Transit Vehicles

### Bus Accessibility Targets:

By 2020, 100% of transit buses will be fully accessible:

- Low floor, kneeling buses will comprise 100% of the transit fleet
- All buses will accommodate two wheelchairs
- Grab bars and call buttons will be available
- Both visual and auditory next stop announcements will be used consistently

## Indicator 2: Accessible Transit Facilities

### Transit Facility Accessibility Targets:

By 2025, 100% of rapid transit stations and major bus terminals will be fully accessible.

By 2040, 100% of stops or stations serviced by any form of transit will be fully accessible.

## Indicator 3: Travel Training Programs

### Travel Training Target:

By 2040, all Canadian transit systems will have **travel training programs** in place for people with disabilities. Travel training programs will be accessible to all community members and will effectively teach people with disabilities how to board transit vehicles.

## Indicator 4: Policies to Promote the Use of Conventional Transit by People with Disabilities

### Conventional Transit Use Target:

The use of conventional transit can be promoted through:

- Offering free transit rides on conventional transit for people in wheelchairs
- Modifying specialized service eligibility rules as regular transit becomes more accessible

# INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

**Specialized Transit Services** provide services to people with disabilities that make it difficult or impossible to use conventional transit. Specialized services often use wheelchair-accessible vehicles to provide door-to-door service between trip origins and destinations. Trips can be pre-booked, or specialized services can allow for spontaneous service by taxi as an option. Currently, a total of approximately 70 specialized transit services are operating in Canada.

## Victoria, British Columbia



Victoria Regional Transit Accessible Services, along with a number of other TransLink and BC Transit systems in British Columbia, provides **HandyDART** service to passengers who have trouble using conventional transit services. HandyDART is a **door-to-door shared transit service** for people with mobility challenges that uses specialized vehicles that eligible customers can book by telephone from one to seven days in advance. Passengers are picked up at their residence or trip origin at the scheduled time, and dropped off at their destination. HandyDART drivers are trained to provide assistance to passengers with mobility challenges.

In Victoria, HandyDART is used in combination with **travel training programs** for both HandyDART and the local conventional low-floor buses. These programs provide free training on how to board buses with a wheelchair or scooter, as well as individualized coaching plans that can be targeted for work trips, appointments, or other commitments. Travel training programs allow people with disabilities or mobility challenges to occasionally use regular transit services in addition to the HandyDART service.

**Travel Training Programs** can be used to help people with disabilities independently use both specialized and conventional transit services. In particular, implementing training programs aimed at increasing the number of people with mobility challenges uses conventional transit can significantly reduce the costs associated with large scale provision of specialized service.

## Edmonton, Alberta

Edmonton Transit System's **Mobility Choices Travel Training** program was established to provide local seniors and people with disabilities with information about their accessible transit options. Mobility Choices is a free program, comprised of videos and presentation, that can be customized to various individuals or groups of people with mobility challenges. It is flexible and can involve **one-on-one training** or **ongoing training** when needed.

The City's website also provides a series of short videos that teach members of the community with mobility challenges to use low floor buses, community buses, light rail transit (LRT), and Edmonton's Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS).



## Ottawa, Ontario

OC Transpo's **Travel Training** program began as a pilot program in 2004, when 500 passes were given to select schools and agencies over a six-month period. The results of a **questionnaire** following this period showed that over 1,170 people participated in Travel Training. 515 of these participants successfully learned that they were capable of independently using conventional transit and purchased a bus pass or tickets following the training; an additional 390 participants were able to take the bus with an attendant.

The program has since expanded: in 2011, all four school boards in the Ottawa area and roughly 40 community agencies participated in Travel Training, to a total of 1500 trainees. Of this group, 491 learned to travel independently and 250 learned to travel with an attendant. The program's success has continued to grow.

OC Transpo's website also provides detailed information on using transit with a disability. Several incentives are also offered to encourage the use of conventional transit: people with visual impairments ride for free, seniors ride free on Wednesdays, and those who are on the Ontario Disability Support Program are eligible for reduced-cost transit passes.

# INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

**Accessible Transit Vehicles and Facilities** are critical in achieving universal transit accessibility. With high costs associated with specialized services, conventional transit that is accessible to the majority of people with mobility challenges can greatly reduce these costs. In 2010, over 80% of Canadian transit buses were low floor; transit systems should aim to achieve a 100% low floor bus fleet. Features such as visual and auditory next stop announcements and fully accessible transit facilities can ensure barrier-free access to conventional transit services.

## Regina, Saskatchewan

Regina Transit recognizes the need for **flexibility** and **adaptation** to the customers' changing needs. Through **customer service** and **up-to-date technologies**, Regina is improving the transit experience and making it appealing to a wide range of community members.

By 2010, over 70% of Regina's conventional transit fleet was made up of **accessible low floor buses** and five bus routes were fully accessible. Regina Transit's goal is to rapidly replace older, inaccessible buses over the coming years and have 100% of conventional transit vehicles and routes be **fully accessible** by 2016.



## Halifax, Nova Scotia



Metro Transit released its **Universal Accessibility Plan** in 2011 through research, a review of best practices, and public consultation to derive a set of recommendations that will make the local transit service more accessible to all passengers. The Plan strives to ensure that "100% of the transit vehicles (ferries and buses) used to deliver Metro Transit services are **'fully accessible'**".

All of the region's high floor buses are being replaced, and the bus fleet is to be comprised entirely of **low floor buses** by 2020. **Accessible facilities** are recommended, located on **level sites** with **ramps** where appropriate. Bus shelters should have **wide openings** and be **large enough to manoeuvre a wheelchair**.



The Plan highlights the importance of providing **interior and exterior "next stop" and "transfer to" audible announcements** on buses to improve accessibility for passengers with impaired vision. It also includes a detailed look at a number of current transit vehicles and facilities, making recommendations for retrofits to achieve **universal design**.

## Toronto, Ontario



The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is committed to **improving access to conventional transit service**. An **Accessible Transit Services Plan** is in place, with annual reports on the status of accessibility initiatives.

The TTC's new "**Toronto Rocket**" subway trains are fully accessible with double-sliding doors, ramps at each end, a wheelchair accessible layout, and passenger assistance intercom systems and alarm strips. 70 of these new trains will replace older vehicles over a three-year period. Older TTC buses and streetcars are also being replaced with accessible vehicles.



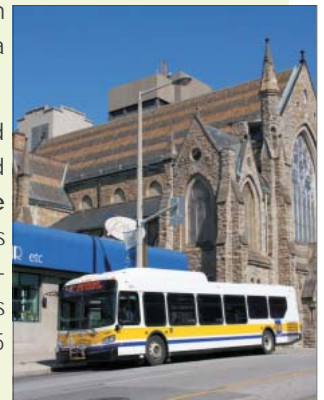
Additionally, all subway stations in Toronto have been or will be retrofitted with **elevators** and other accessibility features by 2025, and all new rapid transit stations in the City will be made fully accessible.

## Hamilton, Ontario

Hamilton has the only fleet in Canada with **front and rear door ramp accessibility**. Full fleet implementation of automated **audio and visual next stop announcements** was also completed in 2010.

Hamilton City Council launched implementation of its **Eligibility Policy** in November 2012 based on functional capability in advance of 2017 AODA regulations. Council also endorsed a budget expected to accommodate growth of approximately 50% in specialized transit usage over a three-year period.

Finally, in 2010 Council implemented the first and only program of its kind in Canada – a free **Golden Age Pass** for seniors, 80 and over. This program complements the long-standing discount policy for seniors with an annual bus Pass for those 65 and over, priced at \$205 annually.



# TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

- Is a reliable specialized transit service available for members of the community who are unable to use conventional forms of transit due to mobility challenges?
- Are travel training programs available to seniors and people with disabilities? Does the transit system's webpage contain all of the information necessary for an understanding of the various forms of transit and how they can be used by all members of the community?
- Do all transit vehicles consistently use visual and auditory next stop announcements?
- Are all transit buses in the community low floor buses with wheelchair access?
- Is an Accessibility Plan in place for transit? Are efforts continuously being made to improve the accessibility of transit facilities, ensuring that they are well-connected with a system of universally accessible pathways and can be accessed and utilized by all members of the community, including people who use wheelchairs?
- Are incentives in place to encourage people with disabilities to make use of local accessible conventional transit options, such as low floor buses, whenever possible? For example, are free conventional transit rides offered to people in wheelchairs?
- Is the transit system working with municipal planning and engineering departments to ensure that fully accessible pedestrian routes are provided, allowing all members of the community to access transit stops and stations from places of residence or employment?

This guide is one in a series designed to assist CUTA members with implementation of *Transit Vision 2040* strategic directions for which they are in a leadership role. It incorporates performance indicators used in annual reporting at a national level to track progress towards 2040 targets. While CUTA is taking the lead for ten of these 27 strategic directions, the remaining 17 fall within the responsibility of other stakeholders, and these guides have been developed in order to provide support to CUTA members and encourage progress toward the *Vision*. The guides summarize the goals and objectives of each strategic direction, propose performance indicators and targets, illustrate best practices from transit systems across the country and provide a checklist to assist members in reviewing their progress.